sity and duration of discomfort, and an apparent decrease in frequency of recurrent attacks. Best results have occurred with Herpes progenitalis. The mechanism of action probably involves combination of dye with guanine bases of viral DNA, followed by breakage of single guanine strands produced by irradiation.

The relative simplicity and efficiency of this technique make it a welcome addition to the treatment armamentarium for recurrent Herpes simplex infections.

ROBERT M. MELNIKOFF, M.D.

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Psoralens and Cutaneous Photosensitization

NATURAL PSORALENS, FROM SEEDS and fruit, have been used since 1400 B.C. for the repigmentation of vitiligo. Two psoralens, 8 methoxypsoralen (methoxsalen) and 4, 5, 8-trimethyl psoralen (trioxsalen), are used clinically to treat vitiligo and to increase cutaneous tolerance to solar radiation.

Psoralens stimulate pigmentation by inducing photosensitization in the presence of long-wave ultraviolet light (320-400 nm). Photoaddition of psoralen with epidermal DNA appears to be responsible for the photosensitization. A heightened but delayed sunburn reaction occurs 20 hours after exposure to appropriate wavelengths of ultraviolet light. Pigmentation subsequent to psoralen photosensitization involves an increased production of the suntan pigment, melanin, and an increase in the number of melanin-producing melanocytes in the skin.

There are no reported adverse systemic reactions. Care must be taken to avoid overexposure and severe sunburn.

FAYE D. ARUNDEL, M.D., F.R.C.P. (C)

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